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UNCLAS HELSINKI 000383

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: FINLAND'S ATTENDANCE AT THE OSLO DONOR'S  
CONFERENCE ON SUDAN

REF: SECSTATE 56724

1. On March 31, Ambassador Mack delivered the reftel talking points to Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Paula Lehtomaki, requesting high-level Finnish attendance and commensurate pledges at the Oslo Donor's Conference on Sudan on April 11-12. Minister Lehtomaki was noticeably impressed to hear that Deputy Secretary Zoellick would attend, but noted that neither she nor Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja would be available to participate in the conference due to prior travel commitments. (Minister Lehtomaki will be in Los Angeles.) Lehtomaki added that she would ensure high-level Finnish representation, perhaps Under Secretary of State for Development Policy Pertti Majanen.

2. Post also delivered the talking points to the Humanitarian Assistance and the Eastern and Western Africa units of the MFA and learned that Mr. Aapo Polho, Director General for the Department of Africa and the Middle East plans to attend the conference. While the Finns intend to donate funds, they have not yet determined how much they will pledge. They expressed strong support for the conference and pointed to the increasingly urgent need for humanitarian assistance in southern Sudan in addition to Darfur.

MACK